

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 022865

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MFM, UA

SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF BUENOS AIRES MFM

FROM ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOWDLER

THE FOLLOWING MAY BE USEFUL BACKGROUND FOR YOU IN LIGHT
OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE BUENOS AIRES MFM:

1) WE ARE, OF COURSE, DISAPPOINTED AT THIS LATEST TURN
OF EVENTS. AS WE SAID IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENT, WE FAIL
TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE MFM DIALOGUE WITH THE SECRETARY,
ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF WHICH WAS TO EXAMINE AREAS OF
CONFLICT, SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTERRUPTED BY THE FEW
UNDESIRABLE PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE ACT -- PROVISIONS
WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ALREADY
INDICATED NEEDED TO BE RECONSIDERED.

2) NEVERTHELESS, WE DO NOT INTEND TO LET THE POSTPONEMENT
OF THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING DETER US FROM TAKING THOSE
ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO OUR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN
LATIN AMERICA THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN. WE HAVE BEEN
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WORKING ON A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES IN THE EXPECTATION

THAT THEY WOULD COALESCE IN TIME FOR THE BA MEETING. THESE PRESUMABLY WERE WORTH DOING ON THEIR MERITS AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THEM ON THAT BASIS, ALTHOUGH WE MAY HAVE TO REVISE THE TIMING AND FORM OF PRESENTATION.

3) THE ARGENTINE ANNOUNCEMENT ON POSTPONEMENT OF THE BA MFM LEAVES FUTURE OF THE DIALOGUE IN SOME DOUBT. THE INITIATIVE FOR RESUMING IT IS CLEARLY IN THE LATIN AMERICA'S COURT. THE LATIN AMERICANS MAY PREFER TO FOLD THE INFORMAL MFM FORMAT INTO THE OAS THROUGH APPROPRIATE RESTRUCTURING. THE APRIL MEETING OF THE OASGA OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THIS POSSIBILITY. IN THE MEANTIME WE WILL CONCENTRATE ON BILATERAL AND SUB-REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WE SEEK. IN THE END THIS RELATIONSHIP MAY BE EASIER TO ACHIEVE VIA THIS ROUTE THAN THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE APPROACH WHERE "LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY" PLACES A PREMIUM ON FOLLOWING THE LOWEST-COMMON-DENOMINATOR POSITION TAKEN BY ANY ONE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

4) FOR OUR PART, AS THE SECRETARY MADE CLEAR IN HIS JANUARY 28 NEWS CONFERENCE, STRENGTHENED HEMISPHERE RELATIONS IS ONE OF THE CARDINAL ASPECTS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY. THE SECRETARY PLANS TO TRAVEL TO SOUTH AMERICA THIS SPRING. WE WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR A GENERALLY BENEFICIAL TWO-WAY EXCHANGE ON A CONTINUING BASIS. KISSINGER

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